

Cardiff's *Goodnight* a team effort

musicpreview

Craig Cardiff

With Alena Manera
Thursday, 1 November at 8pm
Myer Horowitz

DAVID JOHNSTON
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Prolific is one word to describe Craig Cardiff: the Canadian singer/songwriter has released ten albums in the last decade, counting his latest effort, 2006's *Goodnight (Go Home)*. Yet through it all, he's managed to retain a love for performance and a zest for the art and meaning behind his music.

"Music, for me is just an amazing thing, with amazing opportunities," Cardiff says, adding that he originally pursued an academic career, but that as time went on, "music became a viable choice as opposed to a fun hobby."

"I love the live aspect of performance—when you really connect with the audience," the Ontario native continues. "I find live shows are always the strongest, what with the quality of the songs and the quality of the performance; I always focus on those two elements."

His latest album, *Goodnight (Go Home)*, however, represents a bit of a shift in Cardiff's style, focusing less on improvisation than his more relaxed previous efforts. It ultimately comes out with a very intentional sound, in part due to Cardiff opening up and letting others add to his material.

"Collaboration really [helps] the sound; [...] it became more arranged and less composed, if that makes any sense," he says. "In the past, it had



always been very live and reactive."

Although *Goodnight (Go Home)* still has Cardiff prominent and in the driver's seat, the 15 songs on the album feature a dizzying number of appearances by a host of skilled musicians—notably Mike Olsen from the Arcade Fire, Lisa MacIsaac of Mad Violets, and Paul Klemmer of The Hidden Cameras.

"I hadn't done a proper studio album in years," Cardiff says with a laugh. "They were all in these weird locations. [2003's] *Gingers On Barrington Street* was actually recorded at the Gingers on Barrington [in Halifax], for example. But with this collaboration [...] we just started chipping away. The album's really accessible in terms of musicality."

While it may seem like a new style for Cardiff, he's quick to point out that he has no plans of abandoning his off-the-cuff sound.

"It's just a different approach. There's

a lot of polish there this time around. But I'm still quite happy to do live shows, and they're more interesting," he says.

By evolving his sound as an artist, Cardiff keeps his music alive and changing: the mark of a musician who knows better than to stick to any formula for each successive release. It's no easy feat, but somehow, Cardiff has managed to retain high degrees of both originality and versatility. Likewise, his performative creativity hasn't diminished; the man previously notable for his highly intimate small shows is experimenting with the whole conceptual theory on this tour.

"We're visiting a bunch of markets we've never played before; it's an opportunity for us of turning the idea of performance on its head," Cardiff says before simply laughing once again.

"I just like the idea of creating all the time."

Boys Like Girls like fans more than critics

musicpreview

Boys Like Girls

With *The Audition, Valencia, and All Time Low*
Friday, 1 November at 7pm
Starlite Room

ELENI LOUTAS
Arts & Entertainment Writer



John Keefe, drummer for pop-punk four-piece Boys Like Girls, seems proud to be American—he answers his phone with a blaring sample of "The Star-Spangled Banner." This pride in where he comes from is also indicative of Boys Like Girls' devotion to their fans, who propelled them to national recognition and fame after voting the then-unsigned band to the top of purevolume.com's Top Artists chart in 2005 and causing thousands of youngsters to charge for friendship on the band's MySpace.

It was the intense internet buzz that garnered the attention of Columbia Records and paved the way for Boys Like Girls' recent headlining tour, which will re-acquaint Canadian audiences with the band after their stint on this summer's Warped Tour.

In response to their zealous fanbase, the majority of the band's time isn't spent throwing refrigerators off of hotel balconies or becoming bored and unresponsive to the clamouring fans like other pampered pop stars. Instead, Boys Like Girls attempts to cater to the people who helped get them into the limelight—even if it saps up their free time.

"We've been so busy with radio and meet-and-greets and stuff like that, and we have a fan club; we've been

really just trying to do as much as possible with that kind of stuff," Keefe explains. "And yeah, we've been out a couple times; we were just actually in Vegas, which was actually really fun for a couple of days—you know, we lost a bunch of money."

The band is coming to Edmonton hot off the success of their summer anthem, the guitar-driven single "The Great Escape," the chorus of which could, after just on listen, unintentionally staple itself to your memories of patio pints and driving around with the windows down.

The band has been constantly touring since 2006 in support of their self-titled EP, and the exhaustion from such a schedule has only made the band seemingly more ambitious.

"We don't get to see friends and family as much as you'd like to sometimes, but [...] we're all just really excited to be out here doing this. I mean, it's like a dream come true for all of us [...]. I guess the biggest obsta-

cle would be to hopefully keep showing records, and hopefully, kids will still enjoy the music," Keefe explains.

The kids seem to still be enjoying Boys Like Girls, having purchased more than 200 000 of their albums and voted the band 2006's Artist of the Year in *Spin* magazine. The image of kids enjoying the music does pull into question the potentially adult critical reactions towards Boys Like Girls, though—Keefe is defensive of a review that claims his band is little more than "a watered-down copy of Jimmy Eat World." He seems to be more interested in pleasing the fans and the band, as opposed to the critics.

"Well, I guess what I would say to that is if I haven't heard of you as a critic, then why would I give a shit at all?" Keefe responds. "I think we do our own thing, and if you don't like it, then that's fine. I think people just do that to get a rise out of you anyways. It's like, whatever."

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